

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ADDIS 12644 301612Z
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 IO-13 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PRS-01 PA-01 USIA-06 /065 W
-----310110Z 033632 /60

R 301421Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2174
INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 12644

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, ET
SUBJ: PRISONER RELEASE UPDATE

REF: ADDIS ABABA 12516

SUMMARY: RELIABLE SOURCES REPORT OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF PRISONERS RELEASED ORIGINALLY ARRESTED FOR "POLITICAL" REASONS. SOME HAD BEEN ACCUSED OF ECONOMIC SABOTAGE WHEN ARRESTED JULY/AUGUST, WHILE OTHERS RELATIVES OF THOSE PREVIOUSLY ARRESTED OR EXECUTED. RUMORS CIRCULATED BEFORE RELEASE THAT NUMBER WOULD BE SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER THAN 244, BUT RUMOR APPARENTLY BASED ON LARGE NUMBER OF PRISONERS REPORTEDLY RE-EDUCATED IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO RELEASE. END SUMMARY.

1. DEC. 24 PRISONER RELEASE FIRST MAJOR RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS SINCE AUGUST. AMONG 244 RELEASED WERE FORMER MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE DR. ASRAT FELLEKE AND ONE OF HIS DEPARTMENT HEADS; FORMER MINISTER OF NATIONAL RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ATO MEBRATE MENGISTE AND HIS FORMER HEAD OF AGRICULTURE DR. TELAHOUN MENGISTU. THEY AMONG GROUP ARRESTED AS "ECONOMIC SABOTEURS" "JULY/AUGUST WHO COMPOSED MAJORITY OF RELEASES. OTHER NAMES FROM THIS GROUP NOT AVAILABLE AT PRESENT BUT VERY FEW REPORTED TO BE CIVIL SERVANTS.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ADDIS 12644 301612Z

2. SECOND CATEGORY OF PRISONERS RELEASED APPARENTLY WIVES AND YOUNG CHILDREN OF PAST POLITICAL PRISONERS. WIFE AND SON OF AIR FORCE OFFICER EXECUTED AMONG SIXTY IN NOVEMBER 1974 RELEASED, AS WAS DAUGHTER OF IMPORTANT SHIFTA LEADER FROM SHOA PROVINCE WHO CAPTURED AND KILLED

AUGUST 1975. ONE SOURCE REPORTS THIS GROUP OF PRISONERS
ARRESTED 8-9 MONTHS AGO.

3. PRIOR TO RELEASE UP TO 1,000 PRISONERS ALLEGEDLY
BEING RE-EDUCATED TO RE-ENTER SOCIETY. HOWEVER ONLY
256 ACTUALLY RELEASED. OF THESE, EPMG OFFICIALS REALIZED
FOLLOWING DAY 12 PRISONERS MISTAKENLY RELEASED.
SUBSEQUENTLY, THESE 12 RE-ARRESTED, REDUCING FINAL
TOTAL TO 244. WHEN QUESTIONED WHETHER THERE TO BE
ANOTHER RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS IN NEAR FUTURE,
RELIABLE SOURCE ANSWERED PROBABLY NOT FOR 3 OR 4
MONTHS. SOURCE STATED PARENTHETICALLY MAJORITY OF RELEASES WERE
AMHARA, ADDING IT ONLY LOGICAL BECAUSE MAJORITY
ARRESTED WERE AMHARA.

4. COMMENT: EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE THERE ANY SPECIAL
SIGNIFICANCE TO THIS PARTICULAR RELEASE. HOWEVER, IT
INTERESTING TO NOTE PRISONER RELEASES STILL GIVEN
MAJOR ATTENTION BY MEDIA AND EPMG CONTINUES TO ATTEMPT
DEMONSTRATE ITS FORGIVENESS, CURIOUSLY SIMILAR TO FORMER
EMPEROR'S PRACTICE. END COMMENT.
TIENKEN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRISONERS RELEASE, POLITICAL PRISONERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ADDIS12644
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760476-0822
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976121/aaaaaawy.tel
Line Count: 83
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 ADDIS ABABA 12516
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 JUN 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <29 JUN 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRISONER RELEASE UPDATE
TAGS: PINT, ET, (FELLEKE, ASRAT), (MENGISTU, TELAHOUN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006